

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ISO-00 INT-08 GSA-02 CIAE-00

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R 111005Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8875

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

X

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EMIN

SUBJ: TIN PRICES

REF: A. STATE 238293

B. BA

KOK 18348

1. RELIABLE ESTIMATES HARD TO COME BY BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAI TIN PRODUCTION IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1973 WILL BE SHARPLY DOWN FROM LAST YEAR'S 7400 TONS. EVEN PLANNED PRODUCTION FOR FOURTH QUARTER OF 5,950 TONS WILL NOT BE REACHED. ACCORDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MINERAL RESOURKCS, MANY OF THE MINES IN SOUTH THAILAND HAVE SEVERELY CUT BACK OPERATIONS BECAUSE OF CONTINUING DIESEL FUEL SHORTAGES. OUTLOOK FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 74 IS NOT LIKELY TO SHOW SISOIFICANT IMPROVEMENT OVER THE CURRENT QUARTER.

2. THAI PRODUCTION SHORTFALLS PREDATE THE FUEL SHORTAGE. IN THE SIX MONTHS FROM APRIL 1 UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30 OF THIS YEAR THAILAND FELL SHORT BY 10.8 PERCENT OF MEETING THE EXPORT QUOTA GIVEN BY THE INTERNATIONALIFIN COUNCIL. THE THY BOARD

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OF TRADE IN A RECENT REPORT ON THE INDUSTRY HERE OBSERVED THAT THAILAND WAS LAGGING BEHIND OTHER TIN-PRODUCING COUNTRIES IN PRODUCTIVITY. THIS MAY BE DUE TO THE STRUCTURE OF THE THAI TIN INDUSTRY WHERE MANY PRODUCERS DO NOT HAVE THE CAPITAL NECESSARY FOR MODERNIZATION. ALL THE TIN EASY TO EXTRACT IS GONE AND MINING THE REMAINING TIN REQUIRES A HIGHER DEGREE OF TECHNICAL EFFICIENCY THAN MANY OF THE THAI TIN OPERATORS HAVE. ACCORDING TO THE HEAD OF THE THAI MINING ASSOCIATION, THAILAND'S MOST MODERN DREDGER, CAPABLE OF TURNING OUT 500 TONS A MONTH, HAS BEEN OUT OF SERVICE ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF THE TIME DURING THE PAST YEAR.

3. THERE ARE NO SHIPPING PROBLEMS NOR UNUSUAL CONDITIONS AFFECTING THE MARKET.

4. WE HAVE NOTHING TO ADD TO OUR COMMENTS IN REFTTEL B ABOUT PRODUCERS WITHHOLDING TIN FROM THE MARKET. A SOURCES IN THE THAI DEPARTMENT OF MINERAL RESOURCES DOUBTS THAT ANY SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT IS BEING WITHHELD.

KINTNER

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